

P.P. 2038.

THE ZOOLOGIST:

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

OF

NATURAL HISTORY.

FOURTH SERIES.—VOL. XIX.

EDITED BY

FRANK FINN, B.A., F.Z.S.

LONDON:

WEST, NEWMAN & CO., 54, HATTON GARDEN.

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LTD.

1915.



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PREFACE.

IN spite of the dread crisis this country, and to a certain degree the whole of civilization, is now encountering, zoology as a study is showing a marvellous amount of vitality; the Zoo gains a full attendance of visitors, and all our leading animal dealers are still in business; zoological periodicals maintain their issues, and, in particular, the 'Zoologist' not only does this, but, in the seventy-second year of its existence, shows itself as strong as ever it was, and very much stronger than it has been for many years. That the longer papers should come in regularly was only to be expected in the case of a journal so hospitable as ours has always been; what is particularly interesting and important as a sign of vitality is the abundance of short notes, which this year average nearly a dozen per month, a number far greater than has been approached for several years past. This is as it should be, and is in accordance with the character of the 'Zoologist' as the most typically English of zoological publications, and that which most nearly approaches the character of a national institution among them. For this relief from the fear which must necessarily overshadow a small specialist publication in troublous times like these, we owe sincere thanks to our supporters both new and old, to the contributors of long articles and short notes alike, and we feel that they share our gratification in the happy result to the magazine.

There is enough, too, to sadden us at this time quite apart from the world-war, for the hand of death has been heavy on those connected with zoology during the past year. Not only have we had to record the death of our proprietor, Mr. T. P. Newman, whose public-spirited maintenance of our Journal was of greater service to science than many a bulky volume that

has been published in its name; M. Fabre, the great French entomologist, has gone; Mr. R. Lydekker, the well-known palæontologist and sound and dignified popularizer of the zoology of the higher groups; Dr. E. A. Minchin, the celebrated proto-zoologist; Mr. R. Barrington, the veteran Irish naturalist, whose first communication was made to the 'Zoologist,' which he steadily supported for many years with numerous notes; and lastly, just as we go to press, we hear of the death of Mr. H. E. Dresser, most kindly and sensible of ornithologists, and the author of unrivalled works on the birds of Europe and of the palæarctic region generally. Most of these, it is consoling to reflect, had reached a ripe age, as students of our science so commonly do.

As against these melancholy happenings we have to record the publication of some most important and interesting works. Colonel T. Roosevelt's book on the 'Life-histories of African Big Game,' which, though by an American, is published here, with its philosophical criticisms of current theories, and Mr. J. L. Bonhote's book on 'Vigour and Heredity,' with its wealth of experiment and lucid exposition, will be much heard of yet and have a stimulating effect; while Mr. A. Thorburn's magnificent book on 'British Birds,' still in progress, touches the high-water mark of excellence in production. Altogether, with much to grieve for, we have much cause for thankfulness; Britons are holding their own in our science as well as in arms.

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